

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend claims 1 and 5 as follows. Following is a complete listing of the claims pending in the application, as amended:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for use in electroplating a metal that is principally comprised of a metal X onto a wafer pursuant to fabricating microelectronic components on the wafer, ~~the holder~~ comprising:

a reactor adapted to hold an electrolyte;

an electrolyte held by the reactor, the electrolyte being formulated that is used to
electroplate the metal that is principally comprised of the metal X;

a wafer support adapted to support a wafer in a position within the reactor so that at least one surface of the wafer is in contact with the electrolyte during processing;

the wafer support including at least one electrode that is electrically conductive and capable of receiving and conducting electrical current supplied thereto;

said at least one electrode having a contact face that is adapted to engage a surface of the wafer to conduct electrical current thereto;

said contact face engaging the surface of the wafer at a portion of the contact face that has been pre-coated with a metal layer that is principally comprised of the metal X.

2. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said pre-coated layer is at least 0.1 microns in thickness.

3. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said pre-coated layer is formed by electroplating.

4. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said pre-coated layer is formed from the identical material that is electroplated onto the wafer.

5. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for use in electroplating a metal onto a wafer pursuant to fabricating microelectronic components on the wafer, comprising:

a reactor base adapted to hold an electrolyte;

an electrolyte held by the reactor base, the electrolyte being formulated that is
used to electroplate the metal onto the wafer;

a reactor head assembly including

a wafer support mounted to the reactor head assembly and adapted to support a wafer for contact with the electrolyte in the reactor base;

at least one electrode that is electrically conductive and capable of receiving and conducting electrical current supplied thereto;

said at least one electrode having a contact face layer forming at least part of said at least one electrode which is adapted to engage the surface of the wafer to conduct electrical current thereto;

wherein said contact face layer is made from a metal-containing contact face material that comprises the same principal metal that is to be plated onto the wafer.

6. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 5 wherein said contact face layer is at least 0.1 microns in thickness.

7. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 5 wherein said contact face layer is formed by electroplating said contact face material onto the contact face.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A wafer holding assembly for use in an electroplating apparatus used to plate copper onto a wafer pursuant to forming microelectronic components thereon, comprising:

a wafer support mounted to support a wafer within the electroplating apparatus so that at least one surface of the wafer may be brought into contact with copper-containing electrolyte;

at least one electrode that is electrically conductive and capable of receiving and conducting electrical current supplied thereto;
 said at least one electrode having a contact face that is adapted to engage a surface of the wafer to conduct electrical current thereto;
 wherein said contact face is pre-conditioned prior to contacting the wafer by electroplating a copper-containing layer thereon using the copper-containing electrolyte.

10. (Previously Presented) A wafer holding assembly as claimed in claim 9 wherein said copper-containing layer is at least 0.1 microns in thickness.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A method for plating a metal onto the surface of a wafer, comprising:

contacting a surface of the wafer with an electrode having a contact face that is covered by a contact face layer;

submersing a surface of the wafer into a plating bath;

electroplating a metal from the plating bath onto the surface of the wafer by passing electrical current between the wafer and the electrode through the contact face layer;

wherein the contact face layer is formed from the same principal metal that is plated onto the wafer.

14. (Previously Presented) A metal as claimed in claim 13 wherein said contact face layer is formed from the identical material that is plated onto the wafer.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) A method for plating copper onto the surface of a wafer pursuant to forming microelectronic components thereon, comprising:

contacting a surface of the wafer with an electrode at a contact face forming a part of the electrode, said contact face being covered by a contact face layer, said contact face layer being formed from a metal that is principally comprised of copper;

submersing a surface of the wafer into a plating bath which is used to plate a plating material that is principally comprised of copper onto the wafer;

electroplating the plating material onto the surface of the wafer by passing electrical current between the wafer and the electrode through the contact face layer.

17. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 16 and further including the step of electroplating the contact face layer onto the electrode prior to establishing electrical contact between the electrode and the surface of the wafer.

18-24. (Canceled)